

Christmas Carols.

Parents ought to begin in time to plan for a happy Christmas for their children. They need not burden themselves buying presents; the simplest and least expensive gifts are the best. It is a pity that the custom of making costly presents is growing, and that many parents sigh rather than rejoice as the time of the annual merry-making approaches. It should not be given over to handing out things merely; it ought to be a radiant season, filled with sunshine and song, and not with forebodings and fretfulness. There are other and better things to do than to give things away. The best way for a grown man or woman to enjoy Christmas is to become a child again, and the children would ask nothing better. Let business cares go to the winds. Throw off the harness, avoid the clubs and the midnight orgies and stay at home with the little ones and enter into their joys and pleasures.—Charity and Children.

The Winter Fashions.

Drooping shoulders, the full round skirt, voluminous sleeves and the old-fashioned pereline are some of the picturesque modes of the moment, and the shops abound in exquisite materials that have been manufactured especially for developing them. For dressy gowns, the materials preferred are soft and adapted to the full, straight skirts. The new chiffon-velours is the material above all others for these artistic creations. There is an extensive variety of novelties in imported fabrics, among them zibelins and camel's-hair weaves, showing mixtures of two or three contrasting colors, with a heavy mohair natte over-plaid as the distinguishing feature of some of the samples. These goods are fashioned into the most modish coat-and-skirt suits for street wear.

The reign of the shirt waist is supreme, and there are all kinds of these attractive and practical garments, but the smartest girls wear very simple waists, with no trimming save the conventional embroidery.

Embroideries of all kinds continue in vogue, and gowns, bodices, wraps and, indeed, everything else bear this stamp of good style. The old-fashioned eyelet embroidery forms a smart trimming for the simple little cloth blouse in some delicate tint worn over a silk slip of contrasting color or white.

This is undeniably a button season, and buttons big, small and medium size, are extensively used as trimming as well as for their original purpose of fastening garments.

There seems to be no reaction as yet from pendent trimmings, and there are braids, motifs and galons innumerable. Fringes of all sorts are shown, though those of jet and paillettes are perhaps better accepted than any other, and they are charmingly used on black and white frocks of sheer fabrics.—From The Delineator for January.

OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

Aunt Jennie's Letter.

Are you too busy to read anything this week? I always look forward to Christmas week with fond anticipation, as reading is to me recreation in the true sense, and I then find time to indulge in it. Papers and magazines are laid aside for several weeks and gazed at with longing eyes but busy hands.

I hope that all the mothers who have no help in the kitchen will have prepared everything they can for the table before Christmas day arrives, for by doing this they, too, will have time to enjoy some of the festivities. If you do not, then when night comes after that day of toil it will find you tired and congratulating yourself that Christmas comes but once a year.

So many women dread the day, for it so often causes boys and men to forget to whom they owe their allegiance and abuse their better selves by indulging in a liquid which is stronger than water and one which will most assuredly steal their pride, self-respect and manhood from them. Not only this, but remember your example weighs a lot in your friends' estimation of you. Too many a boy has started on the road to ruin on this holy day. It may be that an egg-nog was the first step, or a glass of wine proffered him by some fair hand, which caused him to fall. I want to beg you, my girls, to promise that you will not give any man or boy any intoxicating beverage, either on this or any other day, for then if in after years a brother or friend should become addicted to strong drink remorse will not trouble you; you will have a clear conscience. I am truly thankful that it is no longer considered stylish among the young men to drink. I am glad that older men are becoming more careful as to the habits of a young man whom they employ. I am especially proud of our boys who hold their heads up and pursue the right path in spite of ridicule from fellows of the baser sort.

A letter this week from Indian Territory is especially interesting, and we hope for more of the same kind from the same source. Jennie Acton, too, is with us.

Wishing each and all of you a Merry Christmas, I am as ever,
AUNT JENNIE.

From Jennie Acton.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—They do say that to keep a talking woman's tongue quiet, keep her at work. Well, I believe it. I can't even write when I am busy, and that is the reason I have not been with you before this. Christmas will be here soon, but I am ready for it. What a time we girls do have trying to hide our preserves so that they will be a pleasant surprise for somebody! Why, one year I determined to give mother a number of crocheted mats and I

never did have a harder time keeping anything hid, and, too, I would slip up to my room and work on them sometimes. Finally, the dear soul took a notion that I was in love with somebody and must be writing lots of letters. I grinned and bore it, but when I gave them to her, I begged her next time not to ask so many questions just before Christmas.

I forgot to tell you that I told several gentlemen friends what a time I was having getting them done, so when they called at night I would smuggle my work into the parlor and crochet the whole time. Of course, they did not object, and maybe came oftener than they otherwise would have done, for they felt like they were helping me, you know. Father remarked several times that it was strange that I had become so suddenly popular, but when I gave him his home knit gloves and told him when I knit them, he said he would be quiet as a mouse next time, for he had positive evidence that it was not boys I was studying but him and mother.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I beg to be remembered as,

JENNIE ACTON.

A Voice from Indian Territory.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—To a Tar Heel, fresh from Western North Carolina, the "Land of the Sky," this country affords a striking contrast. In place of mountain peak after peak piercing the clouds, it is a dead, monotonous level that strains the eye in the gazing, and wearies the brain by its sameness, and causes one to long with an intense longing for the quiet river valleys of North Carolina, with their escarpment of mountains towering into cloudland.

As farming country it, however, far surpasses the Eastern States, and the ground only needs to be "tickled with a hoe to laugh with a harvest." The crops grown here are similar to those of North Carolina, but the yield per acre is much larger, and the labor of production much less. Here a hoe is never seen in a cornfield and a one-horse plow would be a curiosity worth going miles to see, yet I would advise no one to emigrate at the present time. The land belongs to the Indians as yet, and all sales are illegal; so a homeseeker stands no chance of securing a home in fee simple.

Land can be rented from the Indians, for a term of years, and the Indian makes an ideal landlord, but the average Tar Heel leaves home in order to better his condition, and he would hardly consider the change from proprietor to renter as a betterment. However, many do so, and say there is money in it. At present allotment has stopped and the Land Office at Tahlequah is closed.

The Indians, that is the full-blood portions of them, are in a state of unrest and dissatisfaction. They have been led to believe by grafters and designing politicians, that their tribal government and laws would be restored to them by January 1, 1904,

also that England insisted on the fulfillment of an old treaty made and entered into between George III. of England and the Cherokees, long anterior to the Revolutionary War, by which he guaranteed to them and their posterity, while grass should grow and water run, all lands lying between the Alleghany mountains, on the east, and the Mississippi River on the west, and for some time they have been expecting the forced removal of the pale-face from that region.

No serious danger need be apprehended, but many of the white renters are uneasy, and tales of old Indian outbreaks and massacres are recalled. The whites, however, outnumber the Indians five to one, so the latter realize their weakness, and will submit in sullen silence. It is those of their own race whom they regard as traitors that are in danger. A few days ago there was great excitement here, caused by the arrival of several bands of Indians. It seems that Oogalah, the great medicine man of this place, and really possessing wonderful skill in the treatment of diseases, had in his treatment of pale-face patients, used some of the formulas and recipes considered by the Indians sacred to the use of the red man only. Oogalah, however, possesses the gift of oratory to a remarkable degree, and after a long pow-wow, the peace-pipe was smoked and the Indians left the medicine man to pursue his avocation in peace. As among his patients treated by mail are some of New York's "Four Hundred" it is money to him to be allowed to treat whites as well as Indians.

In a few years this country will offer great inducements to the seeker after a cheap home, but at present, unless he desires to rent land for a term of years, he had best stay away.

ELLA COOKSON.

Cookson, Indian Territory.

Human Nature Hard to Understand.

One never gets old enough to understand people, or to learn positive lessons in contrasting them. There is a woman here who has suffered almost every sorrow and doesn't get one-thousandth part of the love she gives, and yet she goes around trying to say and do things to bless humanity. Another woman has never suffered physical pain, and is incapable of feeling any other kind; she wears tailor-made clothes; has never faced trouble of any sort, and yet she never lives a day without saying words of malice. One man here is poor and ill half the time, and he frets because he can do so little for other people. Another man is strong and more than passing rich and honored, and yet he harbors evil thoughts of his fellows, and his spirit would prompt him to kick a dog for no cause. You never know exactly what is in the heart or head of the other fellow, or why it is there. In truth, a man dies without ever having understood his own motives.—Charlotte Observer.